

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Final Office Action dated March 15, 2007 and the Office Action that issued on October 4, 2006. Reconsideration and allowance of the application in view of the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 3-13 and 15 are pending in the Application. Claims 1, 2, 14 are canceled herein without prejudice. Claims 3, 8, 12, 13 and 15 are independent claims. By means of the present amendment, the claims have been amended for better conformance to U.S. practice, such as deleting reference numerals typically used in European practice that are known to not limit the scope of the claims. The claims were also amended in consideration of the comments contained in the Office Action that issued on October 4, 2006, particularly the indication that claims 3-4, 8-13 and 15 were allowable if amended to include limitations of base and intervening claims. The claims were not amended in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents. Applicants furthermore reserve the right to reintroduce subject matter deleted herein at a later time during the prosecution of this application or continuing applications.

In the Final Official Action, restriction was required as between Claims 1-2 and 12-15, designated as Group I; Claims 3-7, designated as Group II; and Claims 8-11, designated as Group III, due to an amendment to claims 3 and 5 contained in an amendment submitted on January 15, 2007 that allegedly necessitated the restriction requirement. The Final Office Action indicates that Group 1 was constructively elected for prosecution.

This restriction requirement is respectfully traversed.

Election of Species Under Traverse

In response, as a formality merely to comply with §818.03(b), Applicants hereby preliminarily elect Claims 1, 2 and 12-15, designated as Group I, for an examination on the merits.

It is believe that the restriction requirement is moot in light of the changes contained in the current amendment. The claims have been amended to be in a form indicated as allowable in the Office Action of October 4, 2006. In addition, since it is indicated that the prior amendment necessitated the restriction requirement, it is respectfully submitted that this position is no longer supportable by the claims as presented herein. Accordingly,

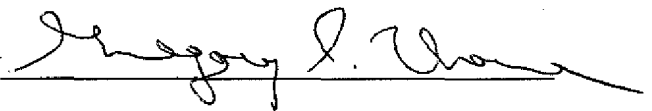
it is respectfully requested that the restriction requirement be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that the current amendment should be entered since the current amendment puts the claims in a suitable form for allowance without raising any new issues requiring further search or consideration. With entrance of the current amendment, claims 3-13 and 15 are in a suitable form for allowance and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

Applicants have made a diligent and sincere effort to place this application in condition for immediate allowance and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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April 19, 2007

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